

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-22 are active in the application.

This is responsive to the Official Action of December 2, 2008. Claims 1-22 will be pending in the application subsequent to entry of this Amendment.

New claims 21 and 22 have been added. Claim 21 is based upon claim 1 and specifies that the aqueous solution does not contain a thickening agent for which basis may be found on page 4, line 5 of the description and also indicates that the light is radiated intermittently onto the aqueous solution until the aqueous solution becomes viscous and shapeable and this is based upon the description found at page 5, line 10.

Independent claim 7 has been similarly amended and now appears as new claim 22. These additional claims are believed to further define the invention and in a manner consistent with the description hence no subject matter is being added.

In the Official Action of December 2, 2008, claims 1-4, 6, 19 and 20 are rejected on the basis of U.S. patent 4,840,851 to Gölander while all but one of the remaining claims are rejected on the basis of U.S. 6,960,275 to Vesley et al as a secondary reference.

Applicants submit that the part of Vesley et al which is indicated by the examiner as pertinent fails to disclose a shaping step.

Specifically, as evidenced by Figure 1, the part of Vesley et al which is indicated by the examiner to be pertinent, merely discloses a manufacturing method wherein 'while a viscous aqueous solution is shaped into a film, the viscous aqueous solution is polymerized by irradiating the aqueous solution with light (i.e., while a viscous aqueous solution is polymerized by irradiating the aqueous solution with light, the aqueous solution is shaped into a film).' Vesley et al, completely fails to disclose an arrangement corresponding to the arrangement of stopping the radiation of light, and shaping an aqueous solution which includes a polymer as a part thereof (a shaping step).

Both Gölander et al and Vesley et al completely fail to disclose an arrangement corresponding to stopping the radiation of light, and shaping an aqueous solution which includes a polymer as a part thereof (a shaping step) as used in the manufacturing method as set forth in independent claim 7.

Applicants' claims, such as claim 7 in particular, include a multiple step feature of a first polymerization to thicken the aqueous solution followed by shaping this thickened solution then a second polymerization where the aqueous solution is fully polymerized in its desired form.

The primary reference to Gölander is in "the field of surface coating of a substrate" that is applying a polymeric coating containing ethylene oxide units as the primary structural units; *see* column 1, lines 7-10.

While it is true that at column 7, lines 11-26, Gölander describes partial then final curing, there is no shaping step described or suggested, that is to say the step of shaping a partially cross-linked gel. In any event, the materials used in Gölander are quite distinct from those specified by the claims of the present application.

Vesley is (apparently) cited for a procedure in which a viscous aqueous solution is polymerized by irradiating the aqueous solution with light, then the aqueous solution is shaped into a film. There is no disclosure in Vesley of

initial irradiation,
completely stopping the radiation with light,
shaping the thickened aqueous solution in a shaping step, and followed by
final irradiation and cure.

As with Gölander et al, Vesley uses a very different polymeric solution primarily based on viscoelastic materials; *see* column 1, lines 18-20 and a more detailed discussion at column 6, lines 28-39. Vesley's viscoelastic pressure-sensitive materials are prepared using a release surface to which the materials are applied then irradiated or otherwise cured.

Neither of these documents, either considered separately or in combination, describes that to which applicants have directed their claims, namely an acrylic acid or an acrylic acid salt which constitutes at least half, and likely more, up to 95 mol%, of the ethylenically unsaturated monomer. Nor do either of the references describe or suggest procedures in which, like the procedure featured in claim 7, there is the first polymerization to polymerize part of the monomer and thicken the aqueous solution followed by stopping the radiation and shaping the thickened aqueous solution which is then followed by a second polymerization to polymerize the solution.

DAIROKU et al
Appl. No. 10/764,444
February 2, 2009

The examiner contends that the arguments presented in the Amendment of October 17, 2008 have not been accepted.

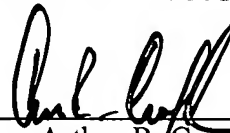
The section "Response to Arguments" provides no specifics as to where either Gölander et al or Vesley et al describe a shaping step or an intermediate shaping step.

For the above reasons it is respectfully submitted that the claims are directed to inventive subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance are solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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